

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 MC-02 NIC-01 ACDA-19 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAM-01

SAJ-01 DRC-01 /127 W

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R 071200Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6757

INFO USNATO 2377

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12275

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, IT, MILI

SUBJECT: SOVIET-ITALIAN AIR FORCE EXCHANGE

REF: DAO MESSAGE 061445Z SEPT. 74 (NOTAL)

1. THE EMBASSY WISHES TO CALL THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION TO DAO REFTEL REPORTING A SOVIET-ITALIAN AIR FORCE EXCHANGE UNDER WHICH A GROUP OF EIGHT CADETS AND TWO OFFICERS WILL BE TRAVELLING TO MOSCOW FOR A ONE-WEEK VISIT BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 15. A RECIPROCAL VISIT TO ITALY BY A SOVIET AIR FORCE GROUP WILL TAKE PLACE AT A LATER DATE.

2. THE CHIEF OF THE MFA'S NATO DESK HAS CONFIRMED TO THE EMBASSY THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ABOVE-MENTIONED EXCHANGE. THE MFA SOURCE SAID THAT THE IDEA HAD ITS GENESIS DURING THE VISIT OF THEN PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI TO USSR IN 1972. SOVIETS HAVE PUSHED THE MATTER RELATIVELY HARD SINCE THEN, AND A POLITICAL LEVEL DECISION WAS FINALLY TAKEN CALLING FOR THE PRESENT EXCHANGE WHICH ITALIANS VIEW AS LOW-PROFILE IN NATURE.

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3. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY AGREES WITH THE POSITION OF THE ITALIAN

MILITARY WHO BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT EXCHANGE SETS A BAD PRECEDENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF ITALY'S NATO MEMBERSHIP. FURTHERMORE, TIMING OF EXCHANGE, COMING ON THE HEELS OF GREEK WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO MILITARY PARTICIPATION AND AT A TIME WHEN THE NATURE OF ITALY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO IS BEING QUESTIONED BY LEFT WING POLITICIANS, SEEMS EXPECIALLY INAPPROPRIATE. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITHIN NATO CONCERNING EXCHANGES OF THIS TYPE. VOLPE

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